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# AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

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NEW SERIES, No. 126.

JUNE, 1919

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## THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS OF JAPAN.\*

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### I. HISTORICAL.

The question of official statistics was among the first to be considered by the Japanese authorities, when the administrative organs were started anew on the Restoration of the Imperial régime (1868). In 1871, a section called the *Seihyokwa* (the Section of Political Tables) was set up in the *Dajōkwan* (the central office for general political affairs, now the Cabinet), and through its operation various statistics were compiled and published under the title of "Japan Political Tables." This section indeed was the first central organ of statistics created in Japan. The year 1881 saw the establishment of the Bureau of Statistics in the *Dajōkwan*, having for its general object to promote the statistical work of the government. But in 1885, when the government organization was remodeled, the *Dajōkwan* was replaced by the Cabinet, and the Board of Statistics was turned into the Bureau of Statistics, under the control of the Cabinet. In 1893, the Bureau was again reduced and placed under the Cabinet Secretariate as the Section of Statistics. In 1898, however, this section, coming under the direct control of the Cabinet, resumed the name of Bureau with its scope enlarged accordingly, and in this condition it has remained to this day. In 1918, a new institution, named the Temporary Census Bureau, was added to the Cabinet with the object of carrying out the First Census in 1920. The Bureau of Statistics, then, together with this sister establishment, may be said conjointly to form the central organs of statistics in the Empire.

\* This article, prepared under the direction of the chief of the Imperial Bureau of Statistics of Japan, was intended for our Memorial Volume, but was received too late to be included.

Besides these central bureaux, each prefectural office as well as each department of the government since the early years of the Meiji era (which begins with 1868) has been provided with a special organ for the purpose of collecting statistics on matters falling under their respective jurisdictions, and in this manner there has existed a definitely established system of statistics all over the country which has continued to develop up to the present time.

*For Reference.*

A. The Successive Heads of the Central Organs of Official Statistics.

Kōji Sugi, Chief of the Seihyōkwa of the Dajōkwan. December, 1871 to May, 1881.

Fumio Yano, Manager, Acting President of the Board of Statistics of the Dajōkwan. June, 1881 to October, 1881.

Shigenari Yasukawa, Manager, Acting President of the Board of Statistics of the Dajōkwan. November, 1881 to April, 1882.

Vicount Koyata Torio, President of the Board of Statistics of the Dajōkwan. (Lieutenant-General.) April, 1882 to December, 1885.

Shigetomo Ishibashi, Director of the Bureau of Statistics of the Cabinet. December, 1885 to November, 1893.

Shigetomo Ishibashi, Chief of the Section of Statistics of the Cabinet. (Secretary of the Cabinet.) November, 1893 to June, 1895.

Masahisa Motoyama, Chief of the Section of Statistics of the Cabinet. (Secretary of the Cabinet.) June, 1895 to February, 1897.

Naosaburō Hanabusa, Chief of the Section of Statistics of the Cabinet. (Secretary of the Cabinet.) February, 1897 to October, 1898.

Naosaburo Hanabusa, Director of the Bureau of Statistics of the Cabinet. November, 1898 to April, 1916.

Toratarō Ushizuka, Director of the Bureau of Statistics of the Cabinet. April, 1916-.

Count Hideo Kodama, President of the Temporary Census Bureau. (Chief Secretary of the Cabinet.) May, 1918-.

Toratarō Ushizuka, Vice-President of the Temporary Census Bureau. May, 1918-.

B. The Membership of the Central Organs of Official Statistics (including additional posts).

	Chokunin rank.	Sōnin rank.	Hannin rank.	Employees.	Total.
Dec. 30, 1871			4		4
Dec. 31, 1875		1	23		24
Dec. 31, 1880		2	18		20
Dec. 31, 1885	1	7	23	27	58
Dec. 31, 1890		1	?	?	?
Dec. 31, 1895		1	20		21
Dec. 31, 1900	1	3	22	50	76
Dec. 31, 1905	1	3	16	80	100
Dec. 31, 1910	1	5	14	145	165
Dec. 31, 1915	1	3	13	124	141
Dec. 31, 1917	1	3	12	131	147

## II. THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION AND WHAT IT HAS ACHIEVED.

(1) The present central and local organs of official statistics are composed of the following members and do statistical work within their respective spheres:

The Cabinet.

The Bureau of Statistics. Director, statisticians (the above are of higher ranks), assistant statisticians, minor officials and employees.

The Temporary Census Bureau. President, vice-president, secretary, statisticians (the above are of higher ranks), assistant statisticians, minor officials and employees.

Each Department of the Government. Superintendent of statistics (higher rank), minor officials and employees.

The Hokkaidō Administration Board and each Prefectural Office. Superintendent of statistics (*hannin* rank), minor officials and employees.

(2) The present central, departmental and prefectural organs of official statistics have, respectively, the following statistical functions:

The Cabinet.

#### The Bureau of Statistics.

- a. The unification of statistics collected by various departmental and prefectural offices.
- b. Collecting statistics of the population, and other statistics not belonging to any individual administrative department, namely, those relating to the state of the population (prepared every fifth year), the movement of the population and the causes of deaths (prepared every year), compiling the Statistical Year Book and the Summary of Statistics every year, and occasional investigations and compilations of miscellaneous statistics.
- c. Exchanging statistical publications between Japan and foreign countries.
- d. The convocation of the superintendents of statistics of departmental and prefectural offices, and holding conferences.

#### The Railway Board.

Collecting statistics concerning state railways, private railways, light railways and tramways.

#### The Department of Foreign Affairs.

Collecting statistics relating to the Japanese subjects living abroad.

#### The Department of Home Affairs.

Collecting statistics concerning Shinto shrines, local administration, elections, police, public works, sanitation, geography, copyright, charity and relief.

#### The Finance Department.

Collecting statistics regarding finance, accounts, taxes, national loans, currency, deposit money, custody, banking, trust and mutual financing.

Collecting statistics relating to tobacco, salt and camphor and statistics relating to imports and exports and transportation to and from oversea dominions.

#### The War Department.

Collecting statistics concerning the army.

#### The Naval Department.

Collecting statistics concerning the navy.

The Department of Justice.

Collecting statistics respecting civil cases, criminal cases, voluntary jurisdiction, census registration, prisons, the protection of discharged prisoners and other judicial functions.

The Department of Education.

Collecting statistics relating to education, science, art and religion.

The Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

Collecting statistics relating to agriculture, commerce and industry, marine products, forestry, mining, geology, and the enforcement of the Factory Law.

The Department of Communications.

Collecting statistics concerning the post, parcels-post, telegraph and telephone, nautical marks, hydraulic power for electricity, electrical business, shipbuilding, land and marine transportation, sea-routes and sea-men. Collecting statistics relating to postal money orders, postal savings, postal life insurance, the payment of pensions and annuities, receipts and payments made on behalf of government offices.

The Chōsen Government-General.

The Taiwan Government-General.

The Karafuto Administration Board.

Collecting statistics relating to the work of their respective jurisdictions.

The Hokkaidō Administration Board and each Prefectural Office.

Collecting miscellaneous statistics relating to the affairs within their respective jurisdictions.

(3) Each government office in the empire has annually published books of statistics compiled by its own statistical organ. As to those issued by the central organ, a brief note will be given later under the head of "Publications."

(4) The following are the principal results hitherto attained by the central organ of statistics:

In the early years of Meiji, the government prepared a plan of census-taking which was to be extended over the whole country. By way of experiment, it caused, at the end of 1879,

the entire province of Kai (identical with Yamanashi Prefecture, one of the present administrative divisions) to be brought under census-taking by the modern method, and the results were arranged and published later by the Board of Statistics.

In 1902, the Law of Census (Law no. 49 of the same year) was promulgated.

In 1903, an estimate was presented to the Imperial Diet for carrying out the first census in the empire in 1905, but the scheme was cut short by the dissolution of the Diet.

In 1910, the Preparatory Census Committee was instituted as an advisory organ to the prime minister with respect to the projected first census, and it continued to 1913.

In 1917, an estimate was presented to the Imperial Diet for the first census to be taken in 1920, and the parliamentary approval of this gave rise to the establishment of the Temporary Census Bureau in the following May. Chōsen, Taiwan and Karafuto also, with their own estimates passed, set up special organs in order to participate in the Imperial census-taking.

(NOTE: Though the above-mentioned census-taking is a matter of the future, it is one which has formed such an important problem since the foundation of the central organ of statistics that its mention here seems appropriate.)

(5) Among the affairs dealt with by the central organ, the international relation of statistical work is a matter which, from the first, has received particular attention. Thus in 1875, at the International Congress of Statisticians held at Budapest, our empire was represented by the French statistician, M. Block Maurice, while to every Conference of the International Institute of Statistics held since 1899 we have sent a delegate, the names of the delegates being Count Y. Yanagisawa, Dr. N. Hanabusa and Dr. I. Takano.

### III. THE PROSPECT OF OUR OFFICIAL STATISTICS.

With the progress of time, the public business and enterprises in the empire have become more and more complicated and diversified, and consequently our official statistics have increased remarkably in scope as well as in detail.

In view of the present conditions, it is undoubtedly of vital

importance for us to be constantly supplied with accurate and well-founded calculations of all the elements of the national power, in order that whatever we may project or put in operation may be based upon the exact knowledge thus obtained of the full extent of our national resources.

If we turn our eyes, however, to the existing system of our official statistics, we find it far from adequate to the requirements of the day. Outside a few classes of statistics relating to the movement of the population and to factories, our central organ is scarcely equal to undertaking itself that indispensable observation of units which lies at the bottom of all statistics, and since much of the investigation and tabulating work in that line is left to the lower administrative organs, we can not expect to see any high degree of accuracy or unity in the results thus produced, but must often be contented with the supply of rough and imperfect information. On the other hand, our central organ is deplorably limited in its function by the fact that the greater part of the statistical work in the empire is divided among and put in charge of various government offices.

Obviously, this tends to produce a lack of interrelation and uniformity among different parts of the statistical work, not to speak of the financial disadvantages which are inevitable under such circumstances.

It is needless to say that, in order to remove these obstacles to a fruitful conduct of our statistical work, the first step to be taken is the expansion of the central statistical organ. It must be reorganized on an enlarged scale and made competent to build up a well-ordered, consistent system of statistics by gradually drawing to itself that part of the work which now is in the hands of various offices and needs to be centralized. As to the methods of investigation and tabulating, there must be a fundamental reform, in accordance with the requirements of science.

#### THE PUBLICATIONS BY THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF STATISTICS.

*Japan Political Tables*, annually issued from 1872 to 1880. The contents were as follows: Foreign Trade, Government Officials, Police, Justice, Hereditary Stipends and Rewards, and the Population.



(NOTE: In the early years of Meiji, "Seihyō" [political tables] was our term for statistics.)

*Tables of Prefectural Finance*, issued annually from 1875 to 1880.

*Imperial Statistical Year Book*, issued annually since 1882.

*Summary of the Imperial Statistics*, issued annually since 1887.

*State of the Population of the Empire*, issued every fifth year since 1898.

*Movement of the Population of the Empire*, issued annually since 1899.

*Statistics of the Causes of Death*, issued annually since 1906.

Besides the above-mentioned, there are dozens of publications issued occasionally since 1899, including statistical material mainly concerning the population, and the results of the study and discussion of miscellaneous statistics.